

Message Text

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22

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 SAI-01 SAM-01 ACDA-05 /094 W

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P R 131835Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7696

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMCONSUL TANGIER

USMISSION USUN

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

FOSIF ROTA

COMSIXTHFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 0835

USCINCEUR AND CINCUSNAVEUR ALSO FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SS SP MR AG

SUBJECT: SAHARA ROUNDUP

1. UNCERTAINTY SURROUNDING OCCUPATION OF MAHBES. FOLLOWING TERSE
GOM ANNOUNCEMENT FEB 12 THAT MOROCCANS "CONTROLLING" MAHBES,
CLOUD HAS HOVERED AROUND DETAILS OF OCCUPATION (RABAT 0797).

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MISSION OFFICERS ARE RECEIVING MIXED REPORTS FROM A VARIETY OF

SOURCES, COVERING WIDE RANGE OF POSSIBLE SCENARIOS. SOME MAINTAIN THAT FIERCE FIGHTING TOOK PLACE (SOME SAY WITH ALGERIANS, OTHERS, WITH POLISARIO) IN COURSE OF GOM OCCUPATION OF CITY; OTHERS CONTEND THAT ALGERIANS HAD EVACUATED AREA BEFORE GOM MOVED IN; STILL OTHERS ASSERT THAT GOM FORCES ONLY OCCUPY HEIGHTS AROUND CITY. WHATEVER THE SITUATION, IT HAS APPARENTLY STABILIZED ENOUGH FOR SOUTHERN MILITARY FORCES COMMANDER COL. DLIMI TO RETURN TO RABAT.

2. WE UNABLE TO SHED ANY LIGHT ON POLISARIO CLAIM THAT IT HAS RECAPTURED AMGALA, BROADCAST OVER RADIO ALGERIA FEB 12 (FBIS LONDON 22200Z), ALTHOUGH THIS STRIKES US AS IMPLAUSIBLE.

3. ALGERIA SUSPENDS AIR TRAVEL WITH MOROCCO. OFFICIAL NEWS AGENCY MAP REPORTED ALGERIA HAD UNILATERALLY SUSPENDED ALL FLIGHTS BY GOM CARRIERS BETWEEN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA. ARTICLE NOTES THAT ROYAL AIR INTER FLIGHTS TO ORAN SUSPENDED SINCE LAST NOVEMBER BUT THAT RAM TUNIS FLIGHT HAD CONTINUED STOP IN ALGIERS "DESPITE DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE." ACCORDING TO LOCAL TRAVEL AGENTS, THIRD NATIONS' CARRIERS CONTINUING THEIR SERVICE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

4. GOM SAYS OAU SEC GEN DUPED BY ALGERIANS. OAU SEC GEN ETEKI ARRIVED RABAT FEB 11. IN ARRIVAL STATEMENT, HE NOTED "CERTAIN TENSIONS" EXISTING IN REGION AND SAID PURPOSE VISIT TO GATHER FACTS SO AS PERMIT SEC GEN OF OAU "OR OTHER PERSONS OR ORGANIZATIONS" TO HELP BRING PEACE AND CALM TO THE REGION. MFA SUBSEQUENTLY ISSUED COMMUNIQUE ON FONMIN LARAKI'S FEB 12 MEETING WITH ETEKI. LARAKI SAID TO HAVE TOLD ETEKI THAT MOROCCO WOULD NOT "REOPEN FILE" NOR "ACCEPT ANY PRESSURE OR DEALINGS ON THE MATTER." MOROCCO "CONVINCED" IT HAS NO PROBLEM WITH ALGERIA AND MAINTAINED THAT EFFORTS TO REDUCE TENSION (CAUSED BY ALGERIA) CANNOT BE DESCRIBED AS "MEDIATION." AT SAME TIME MOROCCO ALWAYS PREPARED TO "LISTEN" IN ORDER TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. COMMUNIQUE SAID LARAKI EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT ALGERIAN MEDIA REPORTS ETEKI RECEIVED POLISARIO REPS IN ALGIERS. OAU SEC GEN SAID TO HAVE REPLIED THAT HE ALSO SURPRISED WHEN HE HAD FOUND HIMSELF CONFRONTED BY POLISARIO REPS AFTER BEING TOLD BY ALGERIAN HOSTS HE WOULD BE SEEING ALGERIAN PRESS. CONSEQUENTLY, HE CLAIMED, HE REFUSED TO DISCUSS ANYTHING WITH THESE ELEMENTS
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"IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS."

5. UN REP WINDS UP SAHARA STAY. UN SEC GEN'S REP ENDED FIVE-DAY VISIT TO SAHARA FEB 12 DURING WHICH HE VISITED EL AYOUN, DAKHLA, AND SMARA. IN SMARA, RYDBECK WENT THROUGH USUAL ROUTINE OF WITNESSING PRO-MOROCCAN POPULAR DEMONSTRATIONS AND MEETINGS WITH SAHARA NOTABLES. BEFORE LEAVING FOR MADRID HE REPORTEDLY TOOK WALK THROUGH EL AYOUN. L'OPINION STORY SAID WALK WAS

ENCOURAGED BY GOM OFFICIALS. IN COURSE OF STROLL THROUGH TOWN, L'OPINION SAID, RYDBECK HAD OCCASION TO SAMPLE AT RANDOM "POPULAR ENTHUSIASM" FOR MOROCCAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER PROVINCE. RYDBECK REPORTEDLY REFUSED COMMENT ON RESULTS OF HIS MISSION, SAYING HE WOULD REPORT DIRECTLY TO WALDHEIM.

6. EXPLANATION OF GOM'S NEGOTIATION CONDITIONS
WELCOMED BY OPPOSITION. USFP'S AL MUHARRIR AND ISTAQLAL'S AL ALAM FEB 12 EDITIONS WELCOMED MININFO BENHIMA'S PARIS CLARIFICATIONS ON GOM NEGOTIATING POSITIONS (RABAT 0743, 0775). BOTH PAPERS STRONGLY APPROVED GOM INSISTENCE ON ALGERIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM SAHARA AS PRECONDITION FOR ANY TALKS. AL MUHARRIR ESPECIALLY ENDORSED PROPOSALS FOR "MAGHREB" ECONOMIC COOPERATION. IT CALLED FOR CHANGING OF STRUGGLE INTO "CONSTRUCTIVE JOINT ACTION." AL ALAM ACCEPTED IDEA OF JOINT EXPLOITATION OF TINDOUF AREA ON CONDITION THAT THESE LANDS BE "RETURNED" TO MOROCCO BEFORE SUCH EXPLOITATION. AS FOR JOINT EXPLOITATION SAHARAN RESOURCES, ALAM LINKED ANY AGREEMENT TO SETTLEMENT (IN MOROCCO'S FAVOR) OF OUTSTANDING BORDER QUESTION. AL ALAM REJECTED "FOREIGN" INVOLVEMENT IN EXPLOITATION OF EITHER MOROCCAN PHOSPHATES OR TINDOUF IRON ORE AND CALLED ON ALGERIA TO ANNUL SOVIET AGREEMENT WITH MOSCOW FOR GARA DJEBILET DEVELOPMENT (RABAT 651).

7. REACTION TO ALGERIAN FEB 11 COMMUNIQUE. USUALLY AUTHORITATIVE HEAD OF SEMI-OFFICIAL MAROC SOIR, AHMED ALAOU, IN FEB. 13 EDITORIAL WROTE SHARP POINT BY POINT REBUTTAL OF ALGERIA'S FEB. 11 COMMUNIQUE. IN CONCLUSION, HE SAID THAT ARAB MEDIATORS "UNANIMOUSLY" EXPRESSED SYMPATHY FOR GOM CAUSE. CHARGED THAT ALGERIANS ATTEMPTING TO "SAVE FACE" BY SEEKING TO "TRANSFORM THEIR AGGRESSION INTO LITIGATION." CONCLUDED THAT "ALL ARBITRATION IMPOSSIBLE", FOR IF ANYONE HAS RIGHT TO POSE CONDITIONS, IT IS MOROCCO.

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